

Proclamation 6330 of September 4, 1991

### Citizenship Day and Constitution Week, 1991

*By the President of the United States of America*

*A Proclamation*

After receiving word in London of our Constitution and its approval by the Congress of the Confederation, John Adams wrote that the document was, "if not the greatest exertion of human understanding, the greatest single effort of national deliberation that the world has ever seen." When they adopted the first 10 Amendments to our Constitution, our Nation's Founders added to that great charter of American government a set of clear, concise, and express guarantees of the fundamental rights of individuals. Known collectively as our Bill of Rights, these 10 amendments have helped to define and to defend our liberties. They have also served as a model for the world. During this 200th anniversary of our Bill of Rights, we do well to reflect on the timeless principles that it enshrines and on our role in upholding them.

The Bill of Rights guarantees, among other basic liberties, freedom of religion and of assembly, as well as freedom of speech and of the press; it protects the right to keep and bear arms; it prohibits unreasonable searches and seizures; and it ensures that no person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law. It also defines basic rules of fairness in criminal procedure. Ratified in 1791, the Bill of Rights makes clear that our Constitution is a charter of limited government based on the principles of federalism. Together these documents express in law our Nation's commitment to the truths first affirmed in our Declaration of Independence: "that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

Our observance of Citizenship Day and Constitution Week reminds us that we have not only many rights but also many responsibilities as citizens of this great Nation. With characteristic eloquence and sagacity, the celebrated American jurist Learned Hand once said: "Liberty lies in the hearts of men and women. When it dies there, no constitution, no law, no court can save it." His words are a stirring reminder that our Constitution and Bill of Rights can be effective guarantees of freedom only as long as we understand and prize the principles that they enshrine. Accordingly, each of us has a responsibility to uphold the ideals of tolerance and justice; to teach our children the difference between liberty and license; and to share in the hard work of freedom—at the ballot box, in the workplace, on the farm, in the military, or through our homes, schools, and places of worship. This is the essence of good citizenship.

The Congress, by joint resolution of February 29, 1952 (36 U.S.C. 153), designated September 17 as "Citizenship Day." Also, by joint resolution of August 2, 1956 (36 U.S.C. 159), the Congress designated the week beginning September 17 and ending September 23 of each year as "Constitution Week."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE BUSH, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim September 17, 1991, as Citizenship Day

and call on government officials to display the flag of the United States on all government buildings. I encourage Federal, State, and local officials, as well as leaders of civic, social, and educational organizations, to conduct ceremonies and programs to commemorate the occasion.

Furthermore, I proclaim the week beginning September 17 and ending September 23, 1991, as Constitution Week, and I encourage all Americans to observe that week with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this fourth day of September, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-one, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and sixteenth.

GEORGE BUSH

Proclamation 6331 of September 4, 1991

### Gold Star Mother's Day, 1991

*By the President of the United States of America*

#### *A Proclamation*

We Americans can never forget the brave and selfless individuals who have given their lives for our country. Indeed, this year alone has given us several poignant reminders of the debt that we owe to each of them. While the 200th anniversary of our Bill of Rights has renewed our appreciation for the blessings of liberty, the war in the Persian Gulf has deepened our gratitude toward those who have died to win them. On this occasion, however, we honor the mothers of our Nation's fallen. Known as Gold Star Mothers, these women have shared in the sacrifices of their children, and they deserve a commensurate portion of our respect and thanks.

Any parent who has ever suffered the loss of a son or daughter knows that when that child dies, a part of oneself dies too. Accordingly, our Nation's Gold Star Mothers understand the value of liberty because they have borne part of the price that has been paid to defend it. Today many Gold Star Mothers are demonstrating their enduring love of freedom through generous voluntary efforts in their communities—including special efforts in behalf of veterans and active duty service members.

Although we set aside this day in their honor, let us pay tribute to our Nation's Gold Star Mothers throughout the year by assuring them—through word and deed—that their children's sacrifices are remembered and appreciated. Let us continue working to promote respect for human rights and the rule of law around the world, and let us pray for lasting peace among nations, so that no more Americans might die in battle, and so that no more mothers might face war's bereavement.

The Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 115 (June 23, 1936), designated the last Sunday in September as "Gold Star Mother's Day" and authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this day.